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File - Test Section, Infantry Board

REPORT

of

The Infantry Board

No. 1652

KNIFE, THROWING

FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

20 July 1944.

24725—Benning, Ga., 9-16-42—2,000

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IB-426

SUBJECT: Knife Throwing. 20 JUL 1944

TO: Chief of Ground Requirements Section, Headquarters Army Ground Forces, Army War College, Washington, D. C.

1. Authority. The test of the subject weapon, which is covered in detail in the attached Record of Test, was directed by 16th Indorsement, Ground Requirements Section, Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 24 June 1944, to President, Infantry Board, file 385 (28 Mar 44) GNRQT-11/88152.

2. Factual Background. The Infantry Board has no information concerning the development of the subject weapon other than the fact that 2nd Lieutenant Edward L. Waggener, Cavalry, claims to be the designer and believes it will be useful to the Armed Forces.

3. Description of Weapon. The subject throwing knife is constructed from two bayonet blades, cut to 10 inches, sharpened on both ends and held together by a rivet and a leaf spring. In the carrying position the blades are together, one over the other. (Figure 1, Record of Test) In the throwing position the blades are at right angles, forming a cross and are held in position by means of a mortise joint in the blades and the tension of the leaf spring. (Figure 2, Record of Test)

4. Facts disclosed by the tests.

a. The technique of throwing the subject knife is similar to that of throwing a baseball with the weapon revolving in a vertical plane. (Test No. 1)

b. The accuracy with which the subject knife can be thrown by the average individual is poor, even at extremely short ranges.

c. The maximum penetration in soft pine to be expected is 7/8 of an inch, and the average of probable penetrations of such target at 5, 10 and 15 yards is approximately forty percent of the number of tries. (Test No. 2)

5. Discussion. The facts disclosed by the tests conducted indicate that subject weapon is difficult to throw and that only by extensive training and prolonged practice would the average individual attain sufficient

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skill to assure a fair degree of accuracy. The weapon is relatively ineffective but the degree of effectiveness would improve as the skill of the thrower developed.

The disadvantages of providing the soldier with a weapon which he "throws away", other than an explosive missile, are apparent.

6. Conclusions. The Infantry Board concludes:

That the subject throwing knife is inaccurate, ineffective and of no value for military purposes.

7. Recommendations. The Infantry Board recommends that the subject knife, throwing, be given no further consideration.

INGOMAR M. OSETH,
Colonel, Infantry,
Director.

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RECORD of TEST

ON

KNIFE, THROWING

TEST SECTION
THE INFANTRY BOARD

FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

TO: THE DIRECTOR, THE INFANTRY BOARD.
HEREWITH DETAILED RECORD OF TESTS
RELATING TO THE ABOVE PROJECT.

WILLIAM P. O'NEAL, Jr.
Major, Infantry,
Acting CHIEF, TEST SECTION

8 Copies.

Copy No. 6 Date 11 July 1944

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1. Authority and References.

a. Authority.

(1) Memorandum, The Infantry Board, (IB-426), 29 June 1944. (Appendix "A")

b, References:

(1) Letter, Student Officer Group, Training Group, The Armored School, 28 March 1944, with fifteen indorsements and one inclosure. (Appendix "B")

2. Introductory Information.

a. The knife, throwing, consists of two bayonet type steel blades 10 inches long, held together by a rivet and leaf spring. In the carrying position the blades are together, one over the other. (Figure 1) In the throwing position they are at right angles forming a cross, and are held rigid by means of a mortise joint in the blades. (Figure 2) The distinguishing feature of the knife is the equal balance of weight around the center.

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3. Purpose of Test.

a. To determine:

(1) Technique of throwing.

(2) Distance and accuracy.

(3) Penetration.

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4. Details of Tests and results are as follows:

Test No. 1.

a. Purpose: To determine the best technique of throwing the subject knife.

b. Method: The Test Officer and eight men practiced throwing the knife and attempted to develop a technique of throwing.

c. Results: It appeared that the knife could be thrown best by grasping any blade firmly in the whole hand, bending the arm slightly, and throwing with a straight over the shoulder motion of the arm as though throwing a baseball. No noticeable wrist motion should be imparted to the knife before it leaves the hand other than that necessary to keep the blades in a vertical plane.

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Test No. 2.

a. Purpose: To test the accuracy with which the subject knife can be thrown and its penetration.

b. Method: The Test Officer and eight men threw the subject knife at a soft pine wood target 24 inches by 48 inches at ranges of 5 yards, 10 yards, and 15 yards. An attempt was made, in the throwing, to throw hard to stick the knife in the target.

c. Results:

(1) At 5 yards there were approximately 80% hits and 70% penetrations.

(2) At 10 yards there were approximately 45% hits and 33% penetrations.

(3) At 15 yards there were approximately 25% hits and 16% penetrations.

(4) Penetrations ranged up to a maximum of 7/8 of an inch and depended on the range and the force with which the knife was thrown.

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5. Summary of Facts Determined by Tests.

The foregoing tests have established the following facts:

a. The technique of throwing the subject knife is generally like that of throwing a baseball. (Test No. 1)

b. The knife cannot be thrown accurately by the average man, even at extremely short ranges. (Test No. 2)

c. The maximum penetration in soft pine at 15 yards is 7/8 of an inch when thrown by an average man. (Test No. 2)

WILLIAM P. O'NEAL, Jr.
Major, Infantry,
Test Officer.

WILLIAM P. O'NEAL, Jr.
Major, Infantry,
Acting Chief of Test Section.

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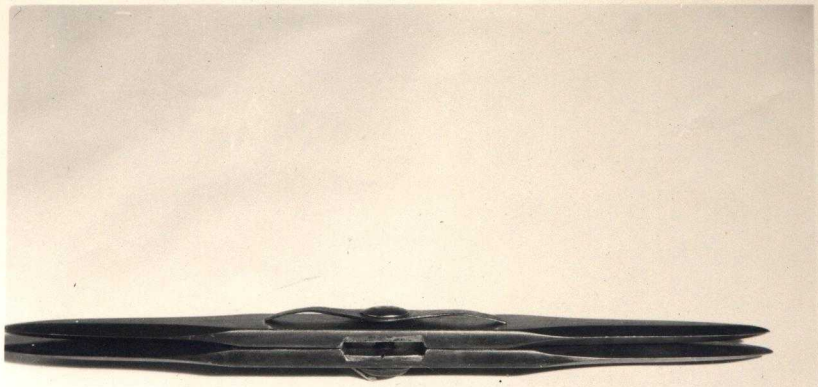

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Knife, Throwing, in Closed Position.

Figure 1

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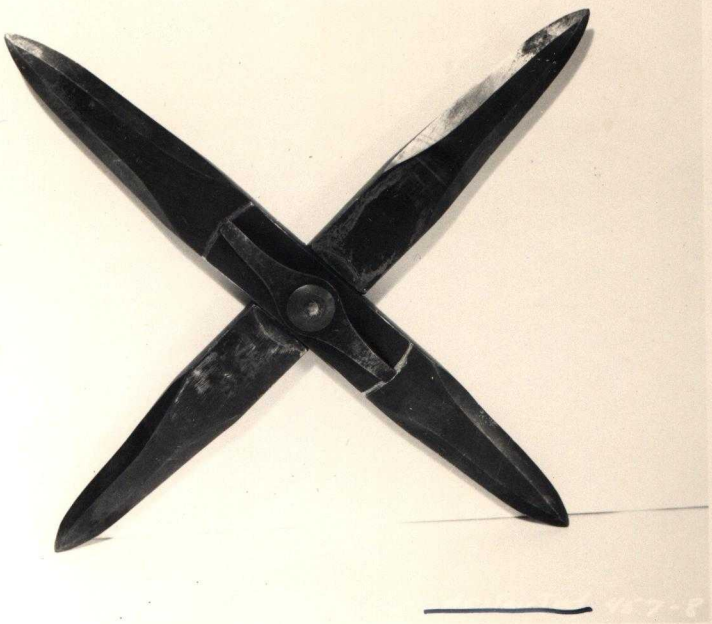

Knife, Throwing, in Throwing Position.

Figure 2